

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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## A NARROW ESCAPE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DONNE," "NO ALTERNATIVE," &c. &c.

### CHAPTER XXIII. THE CRUEL TRUTH.

KATE'S windows in the house in one of the verdure-clad Bayswater roads are bright with flowers, even in mid-winter. In spring it is needless to say they bloom into most softly coloured and harmonised beauty. She is quite remarkable for her masses of snowdrops, her lemon-tinted tulips, and delicately pencilled crocuses; her clumps of Russian violets, and great waxy-headed pale pink, and blue, and buff hyacinths. She is also quite remarkable for her tender, loving care of the same, and for her jealous guardianship of each leaf and bloom from contact with any other hand than her own.

Mrs. Angerstein has made futile, feeble efforts at watering and pruning Kate's pets once or twice, but Kate has suppressed all these efforts.

"They are the only things that are altogether my own," she says. "My family have cut me, my dog is dead, and my cat has strayed away. Leave me my flowers; let me feel that they lift up their heads and recognise me as their only friend. You have your children; I have nothing else."

"My dear, I thought to save you trouble," Mrs. Angerstein responds. "One would imagine you had a sentiment about them; that they were the gift of a lover, instead of being ordered in from the nurseryman's round the corner."

Candid as Kate is in most things, she does not think it necessary to tell Mrs. Angerstein that her "only friends" are the gift of Captain Bellairs; that they have been transplanted from his place in

the country—the place to which, when the time is ripe, he hopes to transplant Kate; and that in lavishing love and care on them, Kate feels almost as if she were bringing herself nearer to the donor.

Kate has stoutly backed up Mrs. Angerstein in the latter's determination not to accept an income from Captain Bellairs.

"I have enough for both; I am making more money than I can spend on myself," Kate says with the unconscious egotism and self-confidence of an author who has still to execute her first failure. "I'm as proud for Cissy as I would be for myself, and, with my consent, she shall not live on any man's bounty. You know, better than I can tell you, what would be said if she did—what would be said of her and thought of you," Kate says when he moots the subject.

"Do you care about what is thought of me, Kate?" he asks. "You have thought badly enough of me in days gone by. Have I redeemed myself in your eyes?"

She looks up at him, and there is a truthful earnest look of desire for her good opinion in his eyes. With all a woman's perspicuity she reads clearly that he loves her better now than he did in those old days in Torquay. But still she dare not unbend, for she distrusts herself.

"How base I have been," she thinks, self-reproachfully, "I'd have taken Frank away from May without compunction, I loved him so well. Shall I ever dare to let myself think that I can go back and take up the original feeling for Harry Bellairs, and try to teach myself that it is a good and true one?"

She turns questioningly to him, as she thinks this, in her candour she is about to state the case to him, and leave it to his judgment. But as she hesitates, the op-

portunity is lost. Cissy comes in, with her garb of widowhood on truly, but with no other sign of widowhood about her, for she is smiling, radiant, perfectly satisfied that he is waiting here for her, and merely putting up with Kate in the meantime.

"Kate," she begins, with a little effort at addressing her communication to Kate only, though she inclines her head towards Captain Bellairs, as she speaks, and gives him her hand in silent salutation. "Kate, the system of treating me like a baby or a fool has been carried on by his lawyer even after my husband's death. I am not the helpless dependent on your bounty that you—that we all thought I was. No other will can be found, and I and my children come in for everything, as next of kin, or something of that sort." Cissy adds vaguely, "And I have been kept in the dark all this time, even while things have been settling themselves in my favour, by the brutality of my brother-in-law."

"To say nothing of the time-serving spirit of your husband's lawyer," Bellairs says coldly. There is an exaltation about Cissy, a forgetfulness of all that she owes to someone else who is present, which chills his warm Irish heart, and fires his hot Irish spirit.

"He knew that I should be all right in the end, you see, Harry," the widow explains eagerly; "he didn't mean it as a slur on me, as his odious family said he did; but after all,"—and here her face falls suddenly—"his income died with him, and it's a barren honour that he has paid me, in letting everything just drift in my direction. There is the house and the furniture (that woman will never enjoy either, thank goodness), and the interest of two thousand pounds; is that much? Can I live on it, Kate? it might almost as well have been nothing as what it is," the complaining bereaved one goes on, before Kate has words at command with which to make answer. "I couldn't get up a spark of gratitude for it under any circumstances, even if I tried, and with the family waiting expectantly for me to express gratitude for what was only passive and limp justice towards me after all; I won't try. How could he dare?"—she goes on, quivering with anger now—"how could he dare to let me live as I did, and then to die as he did without providing for what has become necessity to me and my children?"

"I leave you to talk to Captain Bellairs about it," Kate says, speaking awkwardly

for the first time in her life; "men are so much better advisers than women are, Cissy dear; I'll go and see about ordering supper, and you'll stay and have some with us, won't you?" she adds, suddenly turning to Bellairs, who is only praying that he may be able to detain her to mount guard over the coming interview between himself and Cissy.

"I am only too happy to stay near you under any circumstances; you know that well enough," he says to Miss Mervyn; "but can't you let the supper order itself for once, and stay and hear a more coherent statement of the good news than Cissy has yet given us? Tell it over again, Cissy," he says, with a laugh that is painfully strained and exaggerated.

"The good news," she replies with a sigh, "is only that I am less unjustly treated than I thought I was; but it won't sound very well in the ears of a successful writer, nor in the ears of a man who puts everything in the scale against that successful writer now, and finds everything wanting," she winds up with; and there is a degree of vicious determination about Cissy that staggers her nearest friends, who are only accustomed to her limper and more amiable manner.

"I will stay and hear anything that either of you may be pleased to say," Kate says, in answer to that last remark which Captain Bellairs has made. Then she sits down under a reproachful battery of glances from Cissy.

But the burden of being in another woman's way is too heavy a one for Kate to bear patiently for any long space of time. It occurs to her, also, that it is probably only the natural duplicity of man which is causing Captain Bellairs to portray satisfaction in her society. "Cissy, at least, is honest in the matter, she shows me plainly enough that she wishes me to begone," Kate says to herself, and in a spasm of ill-founded jealousy and annoyance she rises up, and once more declares that there exists some strong household reason for her presence elsewhere.

"The shops will be closed presently, and there are several things that I must get for to-morrow. To-morrow is a Bank holiday, you ought to remember; all shopping must be done to-night," she argues, when Captain Bellairs protests against her going out at this hour.

"At least if you must go you must allow me to escort you," he pleads.

"No, no, no; the necessity for an

escort belongs to my past life, not to my present; besides I should make bad and unprofitable bargains, if I felt that you were standing about, waiting impatiently for the bargaining to be over. You must let me go, and you must let me go alone."

"Kate has a great knack of seeming to be perpetually sacrificing herself," Cissy says, complainingly, as Kate goes out of the room.

"Now I never knew anyone who liked less to play the part of social martyr," Bellairs says, quickly, as he recalls a thousand acts of unappreciated self-abnegation on Kate's part. Perhaps even Bellairs does not realize the extent of the one she is making now in leaving him alone with the widow, who, weak in all else, is strong in her flattering fondness for Bellairs himself.

"I don't know how you can say that conscientiously," Mrs. Angerstein goes on, with an aggravating air of putting it to his sense of justice; "whenever either of us asks her to stay in the room with us, or to go out with us, she tells us that stern duty compels her to do something else, and the something else always sounds as if it were disagreeable; but she will go on doing her duty, disagreeable as it may be. She doesn't say this in so many words, but she implies it, and I would almost rather a person made herself unpleasant straightforwardly than in a roundabout way; you men are so easily wheedled." Mrs. Angerstein winds up with a little laughing toss of her head. "Kate is very good in one respect, though; I am sure if I were as clever as she is, and as beautiful as she is, I'd have made you care ten thousand times more for me than you do for her."

"Perhaps you, like Miss Mervyn, would never have cared to try," he says, carelessly; "but we're drifting into a very idle vein of conversation, Cissy; talk about love-making between us is simply absurd. Brothers and sisters speak sterner stuff."

"We're not brother and sister," she says, meekly; "still I agree with you. Shall I have the children down to see you?" she asks, with a fervent hope in her heart that he will say "no," for she does prize this tête-à-tête with him very highly, unsatisfactory as it has been so far as it has gone.

"Yes, certainly, if they're not gone to bed," he says, leaping at the suggestion gladly, and making for the bell before Cissy has time to change her mind, and

declare it to be an untimely disturbance of her children.

"I don't have them down here very often," she begins explaining. "You see I have not had a proper person to look after them, and Kate says they disturb her when she's writing if they're playing about the room; or, at least, if she doesn't say it, she looks as if she thought it, and so, as I can't bear the idea of my poor darlings being in anybody's way, I keep them in their own room nearly always when they're not at school."

"Poor Kate! she has need of the conditions of perfect, undisturbed quiet and solitude, for she works very hard in these days," Captain Bellairs says, ignoring the tone of complaint which Cissy has infused into her remark.

"Yes I have been most unfortunate in interfering with the peace and solitude that is essential to her writing," Mrs. Angerstein says, resignedly.

"She has never allowed you to feel anything approaching to being in her way; I am sure of that," Captain Bellairs interrupts hurriedly, "Kate is the soul of generosity."

He speaks warmly, reprovingly, his thought is evidently more for Kate than for Cissy, and Cissy cannot forbear showing that she feels that it is so.

"I believe you love her, Harry," she says in a voice that is scarcely above a whisper.

"You surely love her yourself? Are we not all fond of her?" he says, equivocating, in the embarrassment which every man feels when openly charged with having fallen a prey to the tender passion.

"I am very grateful to her," Cissy says, hardly; not that she is hard in reality, but it is a blow to all her dearest hopes, to find that he loves another woman so well, that he is unable even to attempt to deny the fact. "I am very grateful to her," she repeats; "but Harry, I should feel, oh! so infinitely more at peace, if I thought that I should never see either her or you again."

"Until seeing me again will give you the same happiness that the sight of a brother would give you, Cissy, I will not intrude on you," he says, rising up; then he gives the woman, who is rapidly breaking down, a few parting words of advice.

"But let me ask you one last favour, and grant it to me, for your own sake, and your children's, and for the sake of the affection I have for you; don't

cast yourself adrift from the truest, the warmest, and best woman friend you have."

"The last! then is this good-bye?" she asks in bewilderment.

"Yes—until you recall me as a brother," he says. Then he shakes her hand, with a quiet kindness that nearly kills her, and goes away.

She stands where he left her, for a long time, her tear-stained face buried in her hands. She recalls with piteous fidelity every incident of her life with which he has had any connection. "Always good, generous, and true, and always cold to me," she thinks, "but he never chilled my life until I found him lying half dead on Barnes Common. Blankness! I never knew what utter blankness was till to-night."

She tries to stir herself back into animation, by telling herself that she has her children still, her three clever, beautiful, loving children; and then, with a hopeless gasp, she bethinks herself that when they cease to be pets and playthings, they will go out into the world, and find other loves, and other interests, and leave her behind alone!

"Alone, always alone, from this time till the end comes," the weak unhappy woman whispers; "for as for staying to see her happiness—Oh! Harry, that is the most cruel suggestion you ever made to living thing."

#### NATIVE INDUSTRY.

INDUSTRY, in the pastoral period, was, as a matter of course, conducted on patriarchal principles. The tribe, in itself an overgrown family, tended the flocks and herds of their nomad commonwealth, with no assistance but that supplied by the adoption of an occasional captive or hireling, who had intermarried with the original stock. Four-fifths of the work was done—and in Mongolia and the grazing districts of both Tartary and Arabia is still done—by the women of the clan. It was the duty of Fatimah and Ayesha to bake the thin tough cakes on the iron griddle, to twirl the wooden mallet in the leather churn until the sweet milk became butter, to broil the kabobs and to season the pilaff. Leila could weave and spin, shape and sew, valuable arts where tailors and drapers are unknown; and Lara, during the summer camping out, raised

melons and millet and pulse to supplement the curds and roast meat, the dates and boiled partridges, of the family fare. The men considered that to follow the cattle afield, and to fight their way against foes, brute and human, with some of the accomplishments of the tanner, butcher, and felt maker, comprised all that could reasonably be expected from them. Of this primitive division of labour we see distinct signs among those roving races of hunters who still survive. The squaw of Colorado, the gin of the Australian bush, deems it no hardship to collect roots and berries, to carry burthens, to pitch the skin lodge or the bark gunyo. To kill game, and to confront the enemy, are the sole occupations accepted by the noble savage.

Widely different is the case of those large and purely agricultural populations that we find settled on fertile plains, and especially on the rich deltas of some great river, such as Nile or Ganges. There, throughout the historical epoch, we perceive the existence of a warlike dominant class, bearing sway over an immense majority of meek cultivators. So much was this the case in Egypt, that after the extinction of the martial aristocracy of the Pharaohs, and of their Persian, Macedonian, and Arab successors in the government, the slave nobility of the Mamelukes came from afar to establish what was perhaps the most extraordinary rule over the hard-working Fellaheen that ever was set up in any land. In most instances, the military caste in a rich and populous country will be found to be alien in blood from the mass of the people. It is so in Russia, where fully four-fifths of the nobles are of Tartar, German, or Polish descent. It is so in India, where the Hindoo Rajah and the Mohammedan Zemindar are of another race from that of the swarming Sudras who till their domains. The haughty Dorians of Sparta constituted a perpetual garrison, in the midst of slavish helots and submissive periokoi. In France, political struggles have been envenomed by the frequent contests between the descendants of conquering Franks and those of vanquished Gauls, between the Romanised Celts of Armagnac and the French-speaking Goths of Burgundy. And wherever we observe this system to flourish, as in mediæval Europe, we may be tolerably certain that labour will be despised, and some of its most profitable developments impeded or forbidden.



Those who wonder at the tenacity with which a French peasant clings to his few poor acres of land, stony or swampy soil, perhaps a very Moloch which the owner and his wife, his son, and his daughter half kill themselves to cultivate at a profit, should remember that but fourscore years have elapsed since the fall of the cruel and absurd system which crippled the chief industry of France. It seems marvellous—when we read the long list of prohibited crops and modes of cultivation, when we know that much of the land was legally assigned to forest, that bad husbandry, neglected fallow fields, and a thriftless rotation of harvests, were imposed by law—that poor Jacques could wring a wretched livelihood from the land. The seigneur's game preyed at will on his meagre corn patch; the seigneur had a right to claim his unpaid labour; so had the king's intendant, and even at the very harvest-home the peasantry might be swept off to repair the high road; to beat the woods for wolf or boar; or to scare the frogs whose croaking in the castle-moat disturbed the slumbers of some fair marchioness fresh from Paris. *Taillable et corvéable à merci*, the luckless tiller had the pleasure of knowing that high Government financiers were busy in cunning calculations as to how many more straws of taxation the patient camel's back would bear, unbroken, and on how small a modicum of black bread and cabbage-soup soul and body could be kept together.

A large population, dependent on agriculture, and inhabiting a flat and fertile country, is, unfortunately, one peculiarly easy to oppress. A pastoral tribe stands in but little awe of a foreign master. Should the pasha or the mirza prove unbearably rapacious, an exodus is easily managed. A few forced marches carry the clan and its four-footed wealth securely across the frontier, or into some trackless desert where troops cannot readily follow. But the land-tax, the grist-tax, the poll-tax, the tithe, toll, and tribute, cannot be evaded by an unwarlike people, whose possessions lie open to observation and seizure. Accordingly, excepting in China, there have been few instances of really scientific tillage in the countries which, to all appearance, were the most favoured by nature. The black alluvial soil is scratched, and from the shallow furrows there sprouts up a crop, plentiful indeed, but very inferior to that which greater skill would produce. Had the Hollanders and Flem-

ings not enjoyed a large, though hard-won, measure of practical freedom, they would never have converted a sterile, sandy sea-bottom into a market garden overbrimming with abundance. Who would reclaim waste land, or select rare breeds of such cattle as Cuyp loved to paint, merely that bey, or captain of free lances, or robber knight, might drive off the sleek kine at the point of the spear, and perhaps quiet the complaints of the owner, by hanging him in front of his own abode. During the middle ages, as now, in the greater part of India, hired labour was in little request, from sheer lack of enterprise and capital, neither of which can be looked for in the absence of security that he who sows shall also reap.

The natives of some few islands, and the possessors of certain exceptionally rich and unhealthy tracts of land, have been urged, as it were, by necessity or prejudice, to import or invite foreign labour. A small proprietor in Corsica or Sardinia, would think himself degraded did he execute the tasks on which a French or Piedmontese peasant spends his laborious life. Neither could he, if he wished it, find among his own countrymen the patience or the adroitness needed to extract a profit from his fertile farm. It is the mainland of Italy that furnishes him with the brain and muscle requisite. Labourers from Lucca and Modena till his corn-fields, trim his vines, and fill the wine-vats with seething must. We see the same state of things in Ceylon, where rice, and coffee, and cinnamon, are cultivated by drudging coolies from Continental India. The native Cingalese, than whom no defter woodman ever plied an axe, scorns the hoe and spade, and is not to be relied on for the continuous toil of agriculture. The rich Roman Campagna has never been cultivated save by the hands of labourers brought from a distance. It was once the Jamaica of Europe, tilled by the slaves whom Roman patricians collected from every quarter of the compass, Briton and Spaniard, Jew and Negro, working together in the chain-gang. It now depends for tillage on the immigrants, whom high wages allure from the rugged Abruzzi highlands, to face decrepitude and death amidst the sickly mists of the malaria. Bhootan, again, relies for her scanty crops on the obedient captives, whom her kidnappers, till lately, drove up the mountain passes from the lowlands of British India.

A wonderful example of what industry

can accomplish was that set by the Moors in Spain. The plain of Seville, the valley of Malaga, and still more the blooming Vega of Granada, extorted the envious admiration of the Christian foe. The latter, with its innumerable gardens, intersected by rills of pure water from the Darro and the Xenil, studded by thousands of villas, towers, and kiosks, red with roses and gleaming with verdure, was the amazement of the dwellers on the parched plateaux of Central Spain. Skilful irrigation, loving culture, and a more orderly government than that of neighbouring States, had achieved these victories over Nature, soon to be blotted out when the Moriscos had been driven back to their ancestral Africa. In the early part of the fourteenth century the Albigenes, on the other side of the Pyrenees, had followed the Moorish plan of cultivation with astonishing results, when Pope Innocent's Crusaders, the steel-clad chivalry of Northern France, came to root out the heretics with fire and sword. Neither the Moors nor the unfortunate schismatics of Aquitaine depended on hired or enforced labour, and their productive agriculture found few or no imitators elsewhere.

Plantation labour, devised by the Romans, was in a sense re-invented by the Spanish conquerors of the New World. Work, in the vast realms which Columbus, as his epitaph tells us, gave to Castille, made itself manifest in the guise of no beneficent fairy, but as a ravening ogre, hungering for human flesh. The gentle islanders of the Antilles, the docile people of Peru, died off by myriads as they toiled at the mines or tilled the lands of their Spanish taskmasters. The whole Indian population of Hispaniola, numbering seventy thousand souls, perished thus within the short space of two generations. The more robust negro was next imported from Africa to fill up the gap, and for hundreds of years Europe owed her sugar and tobacco, her rice and cotton, to the labour of the sturdy blacks shipped in droves from the Guinea coast. Fiji and Queensland seem now to occupy the same position as that of Demerara and Cuba some half century since. The kidnappers whose light schooners undertake "blackbirding" voyages amidst the islands of the South Seas, and who purvey Polynesian thews and sinews for the settlers on fertile shores beneath the flag of King Cacauban, are neither better nor worse than the slavers whose cruelty caused the horrors of the

"middle passage" to become proverbial. The only difference is that the latter were middlemen, selling the prisoners of war vended to them by some African king, while the former are constrained themselves to decoy and capture the poor wretches who are in such request among the sugar canes and cotton plants. It is the misfortune of a black man, whether from the Niger or the Solomon Group, that his physical strength and small development of brain combine to point him out to the cupidity of shrewder races as a valuable flesh and blood machine to be coerced into usefulness.

The coolie traffic, so called, is very apt to assume the shape of thinly disguised slavery. The Lascars and low-caste natives of India who are welcomed by the planters of Jamaica or the Mauritius are, indeed, thanks to severe regulations, tolerably free agents, and do in effect return home after a while with a hoard of rupees sufficient to buy a farm in Malabar or Bengal. But the Chinese, so many of whom South America absorbs, are inveigled on board ship, in many cases, on the falsest of false pretences, and have some justification for the savage mutinies which often turn an immigrant vessel into a gore-stained shamble. The native agents who recruit for the Guano Islands or the estates of Bolivia transcend, in unscrupulousness as well as in stupendous power of lying, the worst crimps who ever infested our seaports; and poor Ching, his brain reeling with the fumes of opium, suffers himself to be embarked, under the faith of some false oath sworn to him in a temple, and amidst steaming incense burned to hallow the monstrous figment which his credulity has swallowed whole. He is to have good treatment, high pay, the best of food and clothing, a free passage home in two years, with a handsome lump of savings to bring back with him to the banks of the muddy river beside which he was born. He begins to entertain suspicions when he sees guns, loaded with grape-shot, trained so as to sweep the 'tween decks, where he and his brother pigtailed are herded together, while sentries with charged muskets keep jealous watch, and swords and revolvers are carried by the officers of the ship; and he finds out his mistake altogether when he gets among his countrymen beyond the seas, and hears that, articles or no articles, he is never to return.

There are countries, and those the most opposite, which could not carry on the

regular machinery of daily life, were it not for the continuous supply of domestic labour which they receive from abroad. Egypt, Arabia, and Western Asia in general rely for their servants on those long kafilas of miserable captives that leave so many dead on the line of their painful march from the far interior, as they wend their weary way towards Zanzibar. Without this constant stream of enforced negro immigration, it would be difficult for Turkish, Arab, or Persian kousekeeping to go on in the fashion which custom dictates. On the other hand, without Irish men-servants and maid-servants, the wealthiest families in the United States would be forced to depend on the services of the coloured race around them. Native industry, so far as the transatlantic variety of the Anglo-Saxon stock is concerned, declines to devote itself to the making of beds or the preparation of dinners.

The factory system, in manufactures, has always been the direct antithesis of the family, or individual, industry which its more economic results have enabled it to surpass. Without the use of elaborate machinery, impelled by some motive power stronger and more untiring than human muscle, a factory would in vain have striven to compete with the patient skill of the solitary worker whose life has been devoted to his craft. Even as it is, opticians, gunsmiths, and cutlers are well aware that for the most highly-finished and costly portion of their goods they must rely on the intelligent labour of a trained mechanic. There are, and perhaps always will be, industrial products, hand-made, and far surpassing anything which machinery can turn out. But on a broader scale it is impossible for human eyes and fingers to contend in the vast commercial arena of the world's markets, with the hundred-handed giant whose sinews are of steel and whose mighty lungs are filled with all-compelling steam. The traditional manufactures of India, the thin cottons that derive their name from that rich city of Calicut, on which Vasco de Gama brought his cannon to bear; the matchless muslins of Benares, the "woven wind" of Decca, the gorgeous embroideries of Delhi, and the unequalled shawls of Cashmere, could not vie with the wares of Manchester, Leeds, and Paisley. So far as beauty went, the shawl on which patient Cassim and his sons and daughters had laboured lovingly for three years, the filmy whiteness slowly

growing on the bamboo loom of the Bengalee weaver, were beyond our reach. But cheapness, plenty, and rapidity of production soon enabled the highly-paid workmen of England to beat, on their own ground, the most frugal and pertinacious of their Eastern competitors.

The idea of protection to native industry, the proneness to regard native industry as something which it was laudable to encourage at any sacrifice, is not, after all, a very old one. It can, however, boast of a pedigree of respectable length, being among the most powerful of mediæval prejudices, and made itself felt in England almost immediately after the Norman conquest. The violent assaults upon the persons and property of those thrifty Flemish settlers, whom a wise policy invited over to utilise the wool from English fleeces, was an early manifestation of that spirit of narrow jealousy which afterwards culminated in the evil May-day of London, and which, so late as the reign of William III., prompted the fenners of the East of England maliciously to cut the dykes and destroy the dams and sluice-gates of the Dutch "adventurers" who were struggling to reclaim the swampy lands, where then the bittern and the curlew dwelt as in a desert. But in truth there was a tendency in each large town to guard its own especial industries from foreign rivalry, and to treat as foreigners all who had not by birth or grant the freedom of the city. The Duke of Buckingham, when in Charles II.'s reign he earned the easily evoked cheers of the House of Lords by denouncing the knave dealers who dared to bring in Irish beef and bacon, Irish eggs and butter, at prices lower than those of Wilts and Suffolk, was but giving Parliamentary utterance to a doctrine that had been preached for centuries in every guildhall of Western Europe. The burghers of Ghent, or Ypres, or Lincoln, or Norwich had, in their own eyes, the same right to divide the profits of trade as now appertains to the members of a co-operative society. He was a false brother, and worthy of condign punishment, who would bring in over many 'prentice lads, and a suspicious number of interloping journeymen, to study the art and mystery of tanning, or tailoring, or cordwaining, within the magic limits of the civil club.

The agricultural riots and rick-burnings which attended the introduction of the first clumsy reaping, threshing, and hay-

making machines, the Luddite breaking of steam-loom and jenny, the uprising of wrathful thousands to resent the incursion of "foreign" miners or factory hands, have all been identical in motive with the far more savage outbursts against Jew and Fleming, Frenchman and Hollander, which leave a stain upon the page of the historian. Twenty-five years ago, no English shoemaker would reconcile it to his conscience to repair a French made boot. It was deemed a proof of dubious patriotism to wear silks and ribbons from abroad, and he who owned a Geneva watch with a broken mainspring had to seek far, and sue in all humility, before he could prevail upon a fellow-countryman to mend the alien time-keeper. So late as 1846, the exportation of potatoes from French ports was in more than one instance prevented by an indignant mob, who held that the produce of the soil should be consumed where it was grown, while, after the Revolution of two years later many thousands of English workmen were, as is well-known, summarily expelled from France.

The spirit of municipal exclusiveness, which lies at the root of all preference for native industry, has naturally been the more able to evince itself, in proportion to the degree of self-government enjoyed by the members of the community. Thus in monarchical France, where the king was constantly encroaching on the privileges of the great cities, there is less trace of a sturdy, selfish corporate feeling than at Bruges or Hamburgh. Fully to understand the seeming historical puzzles which we meet with when we read of the past, we should remember that there were, for instance, some dozen Englands, wheel within wheel, and often with conflicting interests. A moss-trooping north country borderer would have seemed strange and savage in the eyes of a Kentish rustic or a Cornish fisherman. A citizen of haughty Bristol hardly felt himself of the same blood as the gaunt young cow-boy from the Gloucestershire uplands, who came tramping in search of bread into the rich town, and was very likely sold as a slave to the pagan Danes in Ireland, or, at a later date, to the planters of Virginia. The same division occurs, more forcibly, in Flemish and Italian chronicles. Any dual spoiler or foreign foe could rely on aid from Florence, when Pisa or Genoa was the object of attack. A burgher of Ghent hated a burgher of Bruges as cordially as he did a Burgundian man-at-

arms, and had the bitterest scorn for the rascal commonalty that dwelt without the gates, and envied the prosperity of the craftsmen. Hence, when the wall was breached, and the hostile spears and standards came streaming in, and the bells tolled dismally as the red light arose from burning houses, the indigenous rabble of the place made common cause with the invaders, only too glad to sack the mansions and quell the pride of their former masters.

Some countries, such as Russia, for instance, have always done their best to attract foreign workmen, foreign artists, foreign talent of every sort, conceding special rights and immunities to the valuable colonists whose skill and knowledge silently help to reclaim the natives from barbarism. But for such importations from England, Holland, and Germany, the great Empire of the Czars would not, as at the accession of Peter the Great, have possessed a ship, or a sailor to navigate it, or a foundry for cannon. Despotie rulers of Central Asia, such as Timour, have preferred to sweep off into distant captivity weavers and stone-masons, gardeners and dyers, and roughly to attempt the transplanting of the useful arts to regions where culture was unknown. These arbitrary measures have never been crowned by more than a partial success. Skilled industry is in fact a delicate plant, and one hard to acclimatise on an uncongenial soil. Thus the silk-weavers of Spitalfields have always been quoted as the very type of a suffering and poverty-stricken class, while the clothiers of Yorkshire and the West, the linen manufacturers of Ulster, and the potters of Staffordshire, have long since outstripped the Dutchmen who taught them the rudiments of their craft. North Italy, so far as the Po, depends in a great degree on the industry of the hardy volunteers who come plodding over the mountain roads from beyond the Alps. Lombard windows are glazed, Lombard house fronts are painted, the gilding of the shrines in Lombard churches is retouched, by the cunning hands of Swiss workmen. Sun-bronzed Savoyards toss about the Piedmontese hay, or bear a hand at the Ligurian harvest-home, or toil amidst the dangerous malaria of the rice-fields, beside the lofty embankments of the great river.

The wonderful dexterity with which Japanese workmen can imitate European wares of any sort, was matter of notoriety even in those old days when the extremest



east was as a sealed book to our enquirers. In a less remarkable degree the same may be said of the Chinese, and it may be broadly stated that the most teachable nations belong, not to the Aryan, but to the Turanian stock. The great Indo-Germanic family, of which we are a branch, are by far more distinguished as original thinkers or contrivers than can be predicated of the Mongol race. The mariner's compass, the cultivation of the silkworm, gunpowder, and printing, are certainly discoveries of which the Flowery Land may be justly proud. But the list is nearly an exhaustive one, and for each Slavonic inventor a dozen might be culled from the records of our own and our neighbours' scientific achievements. The Russian jewellers can, indeed, bring out the lustre and the sparkle of diamonds in a manner elsewhere unequalled; while for cheap goldsmith's work, and the showy display of coloured gems, Prague is supreme. Some famous old manufactures are now all but extinct in the birthplace of the art. Toledo and Damascus no longer furnish their historic sword-blades to half a world; Florence and Mantua no longer clothe Europe; the Venetian glass has been but artificially revived. For none can chain the subtle sprite, Prosperity, to their chariot wheels, and when greed or neglect has brought about the period of decay, it is but a blank prospect that awaits Native Industry.

### SAXON DWARFS AND NIXIES.

In the vicinity of the town of Gera, situated towards the southern extremity of Saxony, flourished in the olden time a very large population of dwarfs, under the rule of their king, Coryllis. According to some authorities their height varied from one foot to three; according to others they were much shorter. It seems, however, generally agreed that they were ugly, wizened, deformed little creatures, whose shape was scarcely human, and whose speech was a sort of buzz. Their place of residence was a cavern, near Stublach, which is still called the "Dwarfs' Hollow," and in the midst of which, according to tradition, once stood a goodly castle, which, when they quitted the spot, the mannikins demolished. If any too venturesome wight entered the cavern, with the view of inspecting the castle, he was sure never to reappear, and his disappearance was universally attributed to the murderous indignation of the dwarfs.

The king, Coryllis, had a high reputation for wisdom, and if any ordinary mortal wished to consult him, he had simply to toss three smooth pebbles into the cave, with his face averted, and beg the sagacious monarch to come forward in visible shape.

For a long time, doubtless on account of the wisdom of Coryllis, the dwarfs and their neighbours lived on tolerably good terms with each other, but the former at last became unpopular with the latter, especially the citizens of Gera, through a bad habit of stealing bread, which they preferred newly-baked. So frequent were their depredations, that a famine was apprehended, and the people gladly listened to the counsel of a sage priest, who recommended them to mix some of their dough with carraways. The recipe answered its purpose; the dwarfs fell ill, many of them died, and a general emigration was the result.

Shortly after the consumption of the caraway-bread by the puny robbers, a fisherman, named Wollmar, happened to be with his boat in the neighbourhood. Suddenly he beheld King Coryllis, who requested a passage with his people across the river Elster, and bade him place his hat towards the front of the boat, that the fare might be duly received.

The request was readily granted, and Wollmar soon heard a successive chinking like that of small coin, and though he could see no one besides the king, the gradual sinking of his boat showed that he carried a large freight. Indeed, when he pushed off, the edge was scarcely a couple of inches above the water. When he had reached the opposite bank the boat gradually rose, though nobody, with one exception, was visible, and he perceived that his hat was nearly filled with small gold coin. All of a sudden, when the dwarfs, having left the boat, had gone some distance, he was able to see them, and marvelled at their vast number.

According to one tradition the price paid to Wollmar made him a rich man, to the great astonishment of his neighbours, who did not know whence his wealth was derived. According to another he did not at first recognise the value of the coins, and flung them away till only a few were left, when, to his infinite grief, he discovered his mistake. The rejected coins, as was common on such occasions, were at once converted into dry leaves. The memory of the dwarfs is still held in affec-

tionate respect, and their departure has been mentioned with regret, as bringing to an end one of the blessings of the "good old times." They were useful in attending to the household, took active part whenever brewing and baking was going on, looked after cattle, ploughed by moonlight, and thrashed the corn in winter. Sometimes they asked for a piece of bread, and if it was freely given, the donor, on the following day, would find on one of the furrows of the field, a white cloth, upon which was placed a cake of exquisite savour. The dwarfs were also distinguished for their rigid sense of propriety, and among families who used bad language, and paid no respect to Sunday, they were careful not to remain.

As this excellent testimonial seems to agree but ill with the reported depredations upon the bakers of Gera, it should be stated that the story about the carraways is told in a different way. According to this, a wealthy farmer of Stublach held a wedding-feast at his house, and some of the dwarfs were among the company. The joviality of the day had somewhat turned the farmer's head, and by way of a practical joke, he placed before his little guests some bread spiced with carraways, which he knew they detested. A loud wail was heard, and the dwarfs declared with grief that they must quit the spot which they had loved so well, never to return. It was when they left the farm, that, according to this version of the story, they applied to the fisherman by the river.

The "little woodwomen" (Holzweibel), who, it is said, lived in the forests of the same region, some seventy years ago, although not identical with the dwarfs mentioned above, resembled them in many particulars. Their height was that of a child three years old, but they were quite grey, and had elderly faces. Their dress was that of an ordinary peasant, and they were particularly fond of brownish aprons. Their timidity was singular, but they were equally remarkable for their spirit of independence. Thus, one of them became attached to a young shepherd, and the attachment was highly beneficial to the sheep, for the little woman shook from her apron food enough for the whole flock. In an unlucky fit of gallantry, her lover presented her with a new gown, but she disappeared at once, having first declared that she was perfectly ashamed of him, if he was not ashamed of himself.

Though the "little woodwomen" and

their equally diminutive husbands can be mischievous and vindictive, they are capable of gratitude, and are not without a sense of justice. As an instance of the former case, we may mention the anecdote of a village surgeon who one evening heard a knocking at his window, and a voice calling for help. The sight of a grey "little woodman" (Holzmännel) with a switch was not reassuring, and he felt unwilling to leave the house; but his little visitor represented in terms so pathetic that his wife had broken her arm, and so strongly assured him that he should suffer no harm, that he accompanied the mannikin into the neighbouring wood. Here he found, in a tiny hut, the poor little woman, whose arm he set and bandaged. Thrice did he repeat his visit, but at the last he was rewarded, as he considered, handsomely; for he received five old dollars, which shows that in those days surgeons' bills were not heavy.

In the hay-making season the little woodwomen are apt to grow mischievous, and a story is told of one of them, who, on a certain fine day, amused herself by perpetually upsetting the hay-cocks in a large meadow. Repeatedly warned to desist, she paid no attention to the admonitions, till at last the farmer, to whom the meadow belonged, gave her a smart rap with the handle of a rake. She uttered a piercing cry, and her husband made his appearance to ask what was the matter. The case being explained, the little man honestly confessed that his wife had been rightly served, but he added that he would have killed the farmer if she had received a blow without sufficient cause.

In the history of those little people, the notion that preternatural gifts are not to be irreverently treated, which we find illustrated by the tale of fisherman Wollmar, not unfrequently reappears. On one occasion a ploughboy overhearing the cries of some of the tiny ladies, as they talked about baking their cakes, called out that he would gladly have a specimen of their cookery. Accordingly, a cake appeared on his plough, and though, like a churl as he was, he pushed it off, it persistently returned to its appointed place. At last he flung it to a considerable distance, but immediately heard a shout of indignation, that frightened him out of his wits. Shortly afterwards he fell ill and died.

The most formidable enemy of the little woodwomen is our old friend the Wild Huntsman, of whom such frequent mention

is made in the records of German superstition, and we hear of a man who lived in a village near Gera, and who was quietly sitting with his family at supper, when the door suddenly flew open, and a wood-woman rushed in, uttering piercing screams, and declaring that the Wild Huntsman had shot her husband. Moreover, she attributed the calamity to the rash act of the owner of the house, who, that very day, had stripped a tree of its bark, and that the death either of her or her husband was the inevitable consequence of such an act. She implored him not to repeat the offence, and going round begged all the family to join in her supplications. The man's wife, touched with compassion, gave a plate of sauer-krout and bread to the strange visitor, who crept with it into a corner, and wept while she ate. The application of the law of cause and effect seems somewhat hard in this strange story, but we suspect that it has come down to us in not quite a complete state, and that a belief in the efficacy of the sign of the cross has something to do with it; for the story is told of a little woodwoman who, in the same region, appeared to a man who had just felled a tree and sat upon the stump, which was marked with three crosses. But all that we have gathered in reference to this subject is marked by inconsistency and obscurity. Sometimes the crosses seem to be protection to the pigmies; sometimes they seem to be otherwise.

The odd feature about these dwarfs of the Voigt-land—so is the district called—is the position they take between fairies and ordinary mortals. On the one hand, that they have magical treasures at their disposal, and can sometimes do the work of malignant fiends; on the other, they seem to be almost dependent on the goodwill of man.

A similar remark may be made with respect to the Nixies, who inhabit the waters of the Voigt-land, principal among which are the rivers Elster and Saale. Like the little women, they are family people. We often heard of a mother nixie, who goes about with two handsome daughters, and the habits of these nymphs were so decidedly amphibious, that they would frequently quit their streams to visit the neighbouring towns and villages, and there purchase butcher's meat and other comestibles. On the banks of the river they of course disported themselves after the good old fashion, some sitting on stones, and combing bright green hair, while others sported in the water. But

even these sports were varied by the useful occupation of washing linen. Let us not forget to state that there was a paterfamilias called a Nix.

Like the dwarfs proper, the little women and their husbands are now no more to be seen. The Nixies have also vanished, but they stopped the longest, and Herr Robert Eisel, to whom we are indebted for much information respecting the traditions of Voigt-land, writes in 1871 of an old man, then living, who declared that in his youth he had danced with one of these river beauties. All classes seem to have been actuated by a cause substantially the same—a change in the habits of living in Gera and the vicinity which was not at all to their liking. When people began not only to put carriage seeds into their bread, but to count the dumplings in the pot, and manifest indignation if one of them was missing, the time for departure had arrived.

These Nixies of Southern Saxony were much more mischievous than the little people of whom we have already spoken, and had propensities like those of the ancient Sirens and the Rhenish Lorelei. Children were warned to keep out of their way, when they began their fascinating dances, and grown-up people were often so moved by their fascination, that they pursued them to the river, never, as a rule, to return. In the Saale there was one especially dangerous Nixie who was determined to have her victim on a certain day in every year, and on that day swimming and fishing in the river were sedulously avoided by all prudent folks. But there were always imprudent and presumptuous people enough, to hinder the Nixie of the Saale from being wholly disappointed.

The younger Nixies not only went to market in the towns, but they joined village dances, disguised after a fashion which could deceive the unwary, but failed to impose upon the experienced, who could always recognise a Nixie by the wet edge of her dress. Detected or not, they were sure to find abundance of admirers, who accompanied them part of the way home, but were generally cautious enough not to go too far. Some young fellows have been heard to say that, looking after the dear creatures, they sometimes saw them strike with a switch the waters of a river or pond, which obligingly opened to allow them to pass. The dresses worn by the Nixies, when they visited dancing-rooms, varied greatly, sometimes being those of a

higher, sometimes those of a lower class; but the wet hem was irrepressible. Like the "little people," they were subject to many common-place injuries, and one who patronised a butcher in Pösneck, had her finger chopped off while she was holding the meat. We regret to say that the injury was purposely inflicted by the churlish butcher, and add, without any grief, that when afterwards he strayed by the Nixie's peculiar pond, he was dragged to the bottom. The case of a huntsman who saw a fine fish in the Elster was much harder. He did, indeed, shoot the fish; but, like most of us, he was unaware that among fishes family feeling is strong. No sooner had the shot been fired, than a voice wailed forth: "Thou hast killed my child." The huntsman took to his heels, but the owner of the voice, who was a Nixie, overtook him before he had reached home, and twisted his neck.

Though it was unquestionably dangerous to escort a Nixie home, such an act of courtesy was not necessarily attended by disastrous consequences. For instance, one gallant young gentleman, who accompanied his partner from the ball, was assisted in reaching her residence by a white cloth, which was spread over the water, and allowed him to walk dry-footed; and he came back in good condition on the following morning. Another was allowed to go under water, by means of a flight of steps, which did not become visible till the Nixie had struck the pond with her staff, and which, at a wave of her hand, was again covered over. The visitor was hospitably treated with coffee; and it is worthy of remark, that he found in the subterranean abode, not only the mother of the Nixie, but also a child, who was not a fish.

The coffee, in this case, was reported good; but it was not always expedient to accept the hospitality of a Nix or Nixie. Two young damsels were once bathing, when, all of a sudden, a door opened under the water; a grey little Nix popped up, and carried one of them off. Nothing had been heard of her for some time, when a letter was received by her more (or less) fortunate friend, inviting her to undertake the responsibilities of a godmother. The invitation was courteously accepted; and the girl, on reaching the well-known spot, was conducted into a very decent room, where the ceremony of baptism was duly performed. There was also a banquet in honour of the occasion, in which fish, of a remarkably

tempting appearance, was a prominent feature; but the hostess warned her visitor to resist temptation, as the seeming delicacies were, in reality, nothing but toads, snakes, and lizards. But, from this story we must not draw hasty conclusions, for we have heard of a girl who, happening to see an enormous toad, as she walked along, jestingly offered to stand as god-mother, in case the toad became a parent. The jest was taken in earnest, and not long afterwards, a grey little man brought a formal invitation to a christening that was to be held at a spot characteristically called the Nixenstein. The girl was in doubt as to how she ought to act; but, following the advice of her pastor, she accepted the invitation, and found herself in a handsome room, in the presence of a stately-looking Nixie. The banquet, on this occasion, was most magnificent, and so unobjectionable, that the godmother of the infant Nixie spoke of it with pleasure ever afterwards.

That an elderly Nix encouraged the flirtations with ordinary mortals to which his daughters were notoriously addicted, we have no right to assume. Two young Nixies, so exceptionally pretty that their admirers thought they could not sufficiently honour them otherwise than by calling them "dolls," were in the habit of attending balls in the neighbourhood of their pond; and, on one occasion, were accompanied home by their partners, who descended into the pond by a flight of steps, and found themselves in a spacious apartment. The Nixies hid them behind the doors, saying, that the old Nix, their father, could not tolerate Christian men. In their place of concealment the young men overheard a dialogue between the Nix and his daughters, in which the former asserted that the latter had either brought Christians home or had associated with them elsewhere. The reply that the latter was the case, seemed, for a time, somewhat to satisfy the aquatic Virginius, and nothing serious happened for the moment; but, a short time afterwards, the young men were missing, and nothing more was heard of the "dolls," wherefore it was supposed that these, also, had come to grief.

#### CERES.

HER ear, thick bound with scarlet poppy flowers,  
With golden wheat-ears, and the whiskered lobes  
Of white-bleached barley, with the cornflowers blue,  
That glint like gleaming stars amid the rows  
Of stately helms, ripe for the reaper's hand,  
The teeming goddess comes!



The clover-fields,  
Lush and luxuriant, blush beneath the touch  
Of her quick chariot-wheels, burst into wealth  
Of fair rose-tinted blossoms; and the vetch  
Her purple fronds expandeth to the warmth,  
Of the all-ripening sun. The rich full kobs,  
Of the imperial maize, grow amber-hued,  
Their broad green ribands rustling in the breeze,  
A vast imposing host of banners, weft  
By cunning workmanship, of Nature's looms.  
Drives on the goddess, scattering in her track  
Bounties and blessings. Plenty at her bid,  
Hand-grasped Peace, and they all-blessed twain,  
On either side their sovereign hold the reins  
Of her white steeds, the while they smiling pour,  
From their exhaustless cornucopie  
A stream continuous on the grateful earth!

## EARLY EASTERN TRAVELLERS.

VILLE-HARDOUIN.

THE spirit of travel—that true Wander-Geist which drives the being possessed by it to wander “up and down on the earth and to and fro in it”—is a modern spirit altogether, dating from the invention of the picturesque. Until the romantic school persuaded mankind to look upon nature with a loving eye, the beauties of lofty mountains crowned with streaming glaciers and dark pine forests, of mighty cliffs, wild fells and roaring torrents remained unrecognised. Persons who wrote more than a hundred years ago reserved their raptures for golden corn-fields, teeming orchards, and purple vineyards, regarded the grander bulwarks of nature, such as the Alps, with horror and disgust, and viewed Switzerland less as a storehouse of the picturesque than as an impediment to the traveller seeking Rome or Venice. Nothing is more common than to find the finest passes of the Alps and the grandest scenery in the Highlands described as “awful solitudes,” frightful mountains, and savage wastes.

Wandering, in these days, was regarded as a disagreeable necessity. By Moses—himself a traveller—due emphasis is laid upon that part of the curse of Cain, which condemns him to become a wanderer and a vagabond. Ishmael, the typical Arab, was driven to a nomad existence, simply because Sarah had a temper of her own. Ulysses, that much-enduring man, saw men and cities because he could not help himself. He, like Achilles, tried hard enough to escape the Trojan war, but fate was too strong for him. It is true that he became restless after his return to Ithaca, and grew dissatisfied with that dreary island—rather a “one horse” kingdom to settle down in, after the realms he had seen, and plun-

dered. Penelope, too, had not grown younger, and the suitors were all killed off, so that Ithaca was a dullish spot for a hero, who must have felt that after all the Great Trojan Marauding Company (Unlimited) had been rather a failure than otherwise. Julius Cæsar saw a great deal of the world, mainly because Rome had become too hot to hold him, and it was principally owing to the great Roman's embarrassed circumstances that Gaul was conquered, and Britannia brought under the shadow of the Eagle's wing. When the barbarians got their turn, they showed little reluctance to abandon the picturesque scenery of their native land, and went south, not to admire the Apennines or the Bay of Naples, but for what they could get. Equally were the hardy Norsemen impelled to man their ships by a desire for the *æs alienum*—the raven being an acquisitive bird, and not simply a curious one. It is not probable that Rollo visited the valley of Seine with the view of improving his mind by foreign travel, but far more likely that the mead was running short at home, and that the Viking had received a hint in the nature of that famous dish—served up by borderers' wives when their lords showed a lack of enterprise—known as *spur stew*. Duke William most assuredly did not collect his out-at-elbows army, in order to show them the view from Snowdon or Richmond Hill. A more matter-of-fact and prosy filibustering expedition never started than that led to success by the tanner's grandson.

Before history was understood a certain halo of romance hung over the crusades, but this vanishes entirely on a close examination of contemporary writers. The devotional element may, perhaps, have counted for something among the early promoters of these expeditions; but the crusades were really “floated” and organised by the noble army of barons and men-at-arms out of work, who had waxed weary of breaking each other's heads, just to keep their hands in, and were only too glad of an opportunity of making an onslaught on the East, then reputed to be filled with fabulous treasures. The “meaner sort” were delighted to go anywhere out of the miserable world they lived in. So far as they were concerned, the right of private war and a few other privileges enjoyed by their feudal lords, had gone far to make Europe uninhabitable; and the poor wretches were naturally

anxious to exchange the part of the anvil for that of the hammer. The beavers had a hard time of it during the middle ages, when the nobler beasts of prey did pretty much as they liked in the world. Peaceful industry was a losing game. Towns and villages were incessantly being stormed by somebody, who, of course, exercised all the rights of a conqueror.

Many adventurous spirits grew tired of this state of things, and thus it happened that the crusades received much popular support. Taken altogether, the armies partook of a curiously Adullamite character. Monarchs out of luck, bankrupt barons, and penniless squires rushed to the front, followed by crowds of burnt-out yeomen, ruined traders, and by those professional brigands who found business slack in consequence of their having "cleaned out" everybody in their part of the country. In the East there was something to be got. The hope of ultimate salvation was sweetened by the immediate prospect of plunder, principalities, and power for the big fish, with prize-money galore, and a life of riot and violence for the lesser wanderers. These very mixed motives led the mail-clad barbarians of the west to make a tremendous onslaught on the comparatively civilised Moslems, then pressing hard upon the confines of the effete Byzantine empire. At first the Greeks were not disinclined to welcome their deliverers; but, not less cunning than cowardly, the degenerate Byzantines soon discovered that foes may be more endurable than powerful and rapacious friends, and, after a short acquaintance with the Western Crusaders, heartily wished their allies at the bottom of the Bosphorus. It was true that the extending horns of the Crescent threatened to envelop the city of Constantine in time; but this danger was yet afar off, while the crusading nuisance was present and oppressive in the extreme. Terms could be made with the Mohammedans, who had got almost everything they wanted; but nothing could be done with the Crusaders, whose appetite for pay, plunder, and the good things of this life was insatiable.

Before the time of Ville-Hardouin the Crusaders had undergone some terrible reverses. Thanks to their own atrocious conduct and the bad faith of the Greeks, the adventurers of Western Europe had been considerably thinned. More than this they endeared themselves so much to the inhabitants of the countries through

which they passed, that these populations rose against them and smote them hip and thigh. The grandees for the most part escaped pretty well, but the rank and file suffered severely. Shortly before the advent of our hero things had gone much against the warriors of the Cross. Philip Augustus of France and Richard of England had been stirred into action, by the direful news that the Saracen had seized upon Jerusalem. This intelligence had given a tremendous shock to European public opinion, such as it then was. At least one Pope died of it, and the English king being in want of a fight, and the French king meaning to make a raid on his rival's dominions if he could get the chance, went on the expedition. Richard was a born troubadour and crusader. His mother Eleanor of Aquitaine—the golden-footed dame—had founded the courts of love in gay Guienne, and had distinguished herself in a previous crusade, wherein she, with her light brigade of dames and demoiselles, had acquired a certain celebrity, or notoriety. Richard and the French king quarrelled, of course; Philip Augustus went home to take advantage of Richard's absence, and the crusade was a complete failure. Under these doleful circumstances an entirely new crusade was preached, but Philip Augustus had had enough of one venture, and, like a wise monarch, thought it a capital opportunity to ship off some of his great and exceedingly troublesome vassals. Among these tremendous personages—the "uncrowned monarchs" of the Christian world—two tall heads towered above the rest: those of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and Thibaut, Count of Champagne. The latter great feudatory had recently come into his property at an early age—his brother Henry, who had gone on the previous abortive expedition, having walked out of a window into eternity. Chief-constable of Champagne, and counsellor of its ruler, was the Sire Geoffrey de Ville-Hardouin, no inconsiderable person, and moreover, the author of one of the earliest prose books written in the *Langue d'Oïl*, or modern French. It is, however, an injustice to this noble gentleman to say that the work was written by him. Noblemen of the period disdained the use of the pen, justly esteeming the sword their proper weapon. Throughout the pages of the narrative of the Siege of Constantinople occurs the name of the author—who dictated the

narrative to a clerk or some such base creature, and always speaks of himself Cæsar-wise, or in the third person. His story commences with the preaching of the crusade referred to. "Know," he says, "that in the year of the incarnation of our Lord one thousand one hundred and ninety-eight," at which date Ville-Hardouin was about thirty-one years of age, "at the time of Pope Innocent III., of Philip Augustus, King of France, and of Richard, King of England, there was in France a holy man named Foulques, surnamed of Nueilly, because he was curé of that place, which is a village between Lagny-sur-Marne and Paris." This Foulques "commenced to speak the word of God in France and other countries around, and our Lord performed many miracles through him." The preaching of Foulques led to his being appointed by the Pope to preach the new crusade, in conjunction with the Cardinal of Capua. Pardons and indulgences were granted to those who took the cross, and on Foulques making his appearance at a tournament at the Chateau of Escriz, Thibaut, or Tybalt, Count of Champagne and Brie, Louis, Count of Blois and Chartres, two great barons, Simon de Montfort and Renaud de Montmirail, together with many other nobles eager for Oriental kingdoms, joined the crusade. This example was followed in the year 1200, by Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and his wife Mary, the sister of Thibaut of Champagne. In spite of some rather effervescent enthusiasm, the affair was beginning to hang fire, when in 1201, Ville-Hardouin went with other envoys to arrange with the Republic of Venice for the transport of the troops by sea. The Doge, Henry Dandolo, had once suffered from the tender mercies of a Greek Emperor, who had handed him over to the tormentors, to be blinded. Dandolo having succeeded in escaping with his eyesight only partially damaged, now enjoyed a dignity second to that of no secular prince in Christendom, and recollecting his wrongs, was not likely to miss a chance of paying off the Greeks in their own coin, especially as a claimant to the Imperial throne had presented himself at Venice.

Before starting on this memorable mission, Ville-Hardouin set his house in order, made some heavy settlements on his family and on the church, and set out eastwards in search of greater fortune.

Although a certain enthusiasm was exhibited at Venice, the keen Italians were

not taken at a disadvantage, when the business came to a bargain. The Republic undertook to furnish ships for four thousand five hundred horses and thirty-three thousand five hundred men, in consideration of ninety-five thousand marks of silver, well and duly paid. Another difficulty was to find a leader for the expedition. Ultimately, the Marquis of Montferrat accepted the post of commander-in-chief, and one of the most successful speculations of the middle ages was fairly launched. Over the Mont Cenis, and by other routes, the pilgrims made their way to Venice, whence, having undertaken to capture, en route, the town of Zara for their allies, they set sail. Some few of the Crusaders entertained a species of reluctance to drawing first blood in a Christian city; but, as the reduction of Zara had been made a condition by the Venetians, there was no escape from the unpleasant duty. Ville-Hardouin's account of Zara, a trumpery town in Dalmatia, is deeply interesting as showing what sort of place was considered in his day as a strongly fortified, nay, almost impregnable, city, handsome and rich into the bargain. The marshal, as he loves to describe himself, had seen the great cities of France and the greater city of Venice, and yet confesses his wonder at the splendour of Zara, now known only to mankind by the manufacture of maraschino. After a number of serious quarrels between the Crusaders themselves and their allies, the Venetians, the town was assaulted, and surrendered at discretion. Having got his city, the doge, not caring to risk his ships in stormy weather, suggested that the Crusaders should rest and be thankful, and that, as Zara was a very rich place, well supplied with everything, the city should be divided into two parts, between the French and the Venetians. This having been settled, "Ostel," saith Ville-Hardouin, "was given to each man according to his rank," and the army entered in and dwelt there, but not in peace; for three days after the occupation of Zara, the French and Venetians came to blows: a general *melée* took place, many were killed, and more wounded, and it was only by the strenuous exertions of the chiefs that something like order was restored.

Shortly after this affair a turn was given to the projects of the Crusaders by the arrival of an embassy from Alexis Comnenus, son of the Emperor Isaac Comnenus, who had been dethroned and imprisoned

by his brother, another Alexis. The young prince offered almost any price to the Crusaders, if they would restore his father to the throne; and also impressed upon them the necessity of rescuing a daughter of France, Agnes, sister of Philip Augustus, from the clutches of the usurper. He had already explained his case to his sister Irene, wife of Philip of Suabia, and had tried many of the Crusaders individually. The last great attempt was successful. After long debate, the chiefs agreed to support the Greek prince, who, in addition to offers of a more mundane kind, had undertaken to bring the empire under the sway of Rome, and thus remove the stain of schism from the Christian church. The dissentients represented the enterprise as extravagant and impracticable; but they were ultimately overruled, and the great French barons signed and sealed the treaty.

At last the army—having suffered much by the defection of many impatient spirits—set sail from Zara, on the 7th April, 1203. After delaying a short while at Durazzo, the Crusaders reached Corfu, where the malcontents wanted to remain. It is a peculiar feature of these expeditions that the filibusters were always wanting to stop everywhere for a year or two, and required very little persuasion to "take root," in a promising spot. After many delays they again set sail, and the sight of the whole fleet sailing on a summer sea, roused Ville-Hardouin to enthusiasm. "And bears witness Geoffrey Marshal of Champagne, who dictated this work, and lies not one word to his knowledge, and who was of all the councils, that never was seen anything so beautiful. It seemed as if the whole world were to be conquered, and so far as one could see, was nothing to be seen but sails and ships, so that the hearts of men rejoiced exceedingly."

After many more delays and stoppages at Negropont and elsewhere, the Crusaders entered the Hellespont, and landed at Abydos, where, being well received by the inhabitants, care was taken that "they did not lose the value of a penny," a statement probably worth about as much as the sum indicated. On arriving at Chalcedon, the adventurers were amazed at the luxury and splendour of the east. It is easy to imagine the feelings of the western barbarians, at the sight of a civilised country. In their own land, the northern French and Flemish had been accustomed to see nothing beyond

gloomy castles, small towns—built mostly of wood—and here and there a Gothic church. The environs of Constantinople, which contained within its walls upwards of a million of inhabitants, were covered with palaces, churches, and vast monasteries, decorated with all the meretricious allurements of Byzantine art. Hardly less remarkable, and not less appetising to the hungry band of Crusaders, were evidences of incessant and thriving industry.

Without following the Sire de Ville-Hardouin through all the assaults and intrigues which finally led to the foundation of the Latin empire, I cannot pass over in silence the sense of rugged faith and straightforward honesty which signalised this worthy gentleman. Although prepared to sink, burn, destroy, or capture everything he could lay his hands on, the excellent marshal never fails to record his disgust at the cruelty and faithlessness of the Greeks among themselves, nor does he forget to record the misgivings felt by the Crusaders on first looking at the chances of taking Constantinople. These people, who had never seen anything like a great city, excepting Venice, were thunderstruck at the formidable aspect of the town they proposed to conquer. Perfectly fortified by land and sea, strengthened by formidable towers, and containing a hundred thousand fighting men, Constantinople must have appeared a hard nut to crack to the French and Venetians, who, together, did not number forty thousand souls.

It was nevertheless decided to assault the town at once, the Venetians taking charge of the attack from the water and the French assaulting from the land side. Oddly enough the attack from the water succeeded admirably, while the task imposed upon the French warriors proved too much for them, possibly from the length of the land fortifications—three leagues. It appears, however, that the Venetians enjoyed greater facilities in working their siege engines from their ships than could be got on land, where the troops were worried by constant sorties. On the ships was fixed a quantity of ladders, and also a large number of mangonels and other ancient stone-hurling artillery, and the Venetians, says Ville-Hardouin "ordered their assault right well." On land matters went badly, the besiegers were besieged in their own camp, were short of food, and "could not seek forage more than four bowshots from the camp." Several des-



perate encounters took place, to the great irritation of the French, who at length determined on a grand assault led by the great chiefs of the army: but, to the discomfiture of these warriors, the wall was not defended by the wretched Greeks, but were "strongly manned by English and Danes," says Ville-Hardouin. These northern warriors probably formed part of the famous Varangian Guard—a band of foreign mercenaries in the pay of the Greek Emperors, who, like their Mahomedan successors, preferred to entrust their personal safety to Varangians, Janissaries, or Mamelukes rather than to place confidence in their own countrymen. The northmen were armed with axes, which they used to such purpose that, although at one moment some fifteen of the assaulting party obtained a lodgment on the battlements, they were ultimately hurled back in disorder.

Meanwhile the Venetians were making their way.

"Then you should have seen the mangonels and other machines of war, adjusted on the poops of the vessels, throwing great stones into the town, and the number of cross-bow bolts and arrows flying in the air, while those within defended themselves generously. From outside, the ladders, mounted on the ships, approached so closely to the walls that in many places the soldiers were fighting hand to hand, exchanging sword and lance thrusts, the cries being so great that it seemed as if earth and sea were about to melt together." This attack was successful. Twenty-five towers were taken and the city was at the mercy of the crusading army. Disasters now brought about a revolution within the city. The usurper fled, the former emperor was reinstated, and the object of young Alexis was achieved. Ville-Hardouin took an important part in arranging a treaty between the Crusaders and the restored emperor. The Christian heroes did not forget to ask enough. They insisted that the emperor should pay them two hundred thousand silver marks—an enormous sum at that period—should furnish the army with food during a year, should maintain five hundred chevaliers in the Holy Land, should serve either in person or by his son in the crusade, and finally should bring the Byzantine Empire under the spiritual jurisdiction of Rome. These terms were agreed to; but young Alexis, having got all he wanted, soon

became anxious to get rid of his father's deliverers. But there was a financial difficulty. Only a few instalments of the sum promised had been paid-up, and the Crusaders declined to depart for the Holy Land until the whole bill was "settled." Ultimately it was decided that the chiefs should wait for a year in the neighbourhood of Constantinople.

It would be tedious to follow the domestic revolutions among the Greeks. The young Alexis, after trying his best to shuffle off the Crusaders, who had settled down by no means quietly in his neighbourhood, was killed off himself by an usurper named Murtzuphle, who at the first gleam of success, thought himself equal to the task of sweeping the Crusaders out of the country. Their number was now reduced to twenty thousand, and many croakers were found in the camp; but the impetuosity of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, prevailed, the city became the prey of its friends, and Baldwin was made the first Latin Emperor of Constantinople. The town was sacked. Express orders were given that the inhabitants were neither to be murdered nor outraged, and were obeyed as such orders generally are. Every kind of licence prevailed in the city. St. Sophia was pillaged and profaned. The wretched Greeks sought in vain to protect their families from the fury of the soldiery, and wandered about the environs of Constantinople in the most wretched condition. An unheard-of amount of plunder gratified the conquerors. The French, after paying fifty thousand marks they owed to the Venetians, found themselves in the possession of four hundred thousand marks and an empire.

Baldwin—one of the unlucky wights of history—was not destined to enjoy his victory. To begin with, his wife, the sister of Tybalt of Champagne, Ville-Hardouin's liege lord, died of joy at hearing that her husband had become Emperor of the East, and he himself did not long survive her. A general outbreak occurred in the provinces of Greece proper. Theodore Lascaris, the native claimant to the Imperial throne, attracted the bulk of the Imperial forces to pursue him into Asia, while the European provinces burst into revolution, and the Bulgarians let loose their savage hordes upon the empire. Ville-Hardouin had been dispatched to keep these barbarians in check, and the varlike Baldwin, ignoring all the entreaties of the venerable doge, insisted on hurrying to his assistance.

After an unsuccessful attack upon Adrianople, it was decided to risk a battle in the field. Ville-Hardouin being left to guard the camp with a portion of the army, the Emperor Baldwin gave battle, but was entirely out-manceuvred by the enemy, who, making a running fight of it, succeeded in outflanking him. The Christian army was scattered, and the Emperor taken prisoner. Ville-Hardouin, however, held his own. Baldwin was a prisoner, the Count of Blois killed, and the main body of the army scattered, but the tough old Constable of Champagne—"fermé sur les quatre pattes"—kept his troops together, rallied the scattered fragments of the host, and made good his retreat to Constantinople.

The fate of the Emperor Baldwin was both melancholy and curious. A prisoner at Ternova, the principal residence of John, King of the Bulgarians, he was treated fairly for a while, but was ultimately thrown into a dungeon. Under these unhappy circumstances, deliverance was offered from an unhoped-for quarter. The Queen of the Bulgarians—a native of Tartary—having seen him at his arrival, had taken an exceeding interest in him. This was natural enough. Baldwin was only thirty-five years old, and was in every respect a gallant cavalier.

Handsome, brave, and calm under misfortune, he attracted the affection of a woman whose only previous idea of a man was a Tartar. Under the pretext of charity, she often visited Baldwin in his dungeon, and lost little time in revealing to him the affection he had inspired. Finally, she proposed to fly with him to Constantinople. Why he refused is not very clear. Perhaps it was because he had made a vow of chastity on the death of Marie of Champagne, perhaps because the Tartar queen was ill-favoured, but at any rate he "refused the proposition with horror." He might at least have been civil. He soon experienced the consequences of his rudeness, and found out to his cost, that—

Heaven knows no rage like love to hatred turned,  
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.

The queen did what women have always done in these cases, since the days of Potiphar's wife. She told her husband that Baldwin had proposed to elope with her, and make her Empress of Constantinople. King John, of Bulgaria, said little, but thought the more, and a few days

later—on the occasion of a great feast—had the emperor brought before him, sabred in his presence, and thrown out as a "dish for dogs." Thus perished Baldwin, sometime Count of Flanders, and Emperor of Constantinople, through his dislike for the Mongolian style of beauty.

He was succeeded by his brother Henry, who married the daughter of the Marquis of Montferrat—subsequently King of Thessalonica. The brave constable received the bride on her arrival, and presented her to the bridegroom. All difficulties between the Crusaders themselves being now arranged by the absorption and partition of the eastern empire, the Greek claimant having been driven off, and the Bulgarians finally scattered, our old friend, Ville Hardouin, received his share of the spoil. Equally dear to the young emperor and to the King of Thessalonica, he received from the one the marshalate of Roumania, and from the other the city and territory of Messinople, among which vast domains he took up his residence, having, like a gallant warrior, found the principality he had all along been fighting for. The doughty marshal died about the year 1213, before the splendour of the Latin empire had grown dim. His nephew, Geoffrey, who conquered the Morea, left descendants, who maintained their position till the final downfall of the Greek empire, when the last representative of the family became absorbed in the Royal House of Savoy.

## SAFELY MARRIED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN EXPERIENCE," "DAISY'S TRIALS," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XVII.

My progress along passages and upstairs, leaning on Markham's arm—to her best care Allan had commended me—was very slow. I was cold and sick at heart, and my limbs felt leaden-weighted.

"She wants you, ma'am," said Markham; "she's been alone almost ever since you left her. She won't suffer me nor Parker in the room, except just while we lighted it up; but she wants you, ma'am, she said as you was to be brought up to her directly as you left master." Markham used an undertone, full of mystery.

I found myself speculating, as I listened to this, what sort of change in Markham's feelings towards Elsie, whether in the direction of pity or of contemptuous con-

demnation, had caused so scrupulously proper a person to substitute that "she" for "my mistress, Mrs. Braithwait." I also, in those few moments of tedious pilgrimage, speculated on the ironies of Fate, which made of so feeble an old woman something of a ball to be tossed to and fro between that terrible, stern "he," from whom I had just parted, and this sinful "she," towards whom I was making my difficult way.

When Markham presently, in her discreet voice, the very sound of which promised inviolable confidence, as did the whole aspect of her iron-grey, closely-compressed person, asked two or three most discreet questions, I could only groan out a request not to be spoken to.

That Markham supposed her mistress to be mad was the idea that occurred to me, when I found that she had turned the key of her bed-room door upon her, before obeying the summons from Mr. Braithwait, though Parker was sitting at work in the dressing-room. She could not, anyway, think her dangerously mad, for she now dismissed Parker, and then let me go in alone, telling me, at the same time, that she would, with my permission, look at some linen that was to be packed for her master while I remained with her mistress.

Elfie's great room was indeed "lighted up," lighted *au jour*, what with blazing fire-light and many wax-lights. She had wished this, I found, complaining of the cold and the dark. In spite of this brilliant lighting up, or, perhaps, because of it, I did not at first see Elfie; I thought the great cage was empty and the bird escaped. But, after a few moments, I found that a white heap on a couch, in a far corner, meant Elfie. But the white heap was soundless and motionless. I had not come in quietly, for I had stumbled over a footstool and had nearly fallen, and, in recovering myself, I had uttered a pretty sharp exclamation of pain, for I had a very tender corn; nevertheless, there was no stir nor speech from Elfie.

As quickly as I could, with limbs that trembled under me, I made my way to her couch. Because I could not stand or stoop, I went down on my stiff old knees beside it, to bring my face close to hers. I could not detect the flicker of an eyelash, the slightest sighing breath, or any faintest indication of life. But for the absence of any of the rigidity of death, she might, for the pale and perfect stillness in which she lay—in the prettiest attitude and one of

complete abandonment, the head thrown back upon the blue-veined, inner side of the white, uplifted arm, the other hand upon her breast—have been already one hour dead.

That she was dead, in spite of the soft ease of attitude, suggested itself to me.

Somehow, the brilliant lighting of the room seemed to me to make this trance-like stillness of Elfie's the more unnatural and ghastly.

I lifted Elfie's hand from off her breast, untied the ribbons fastening her loose wrapper, and tore open the muslins, and the laces, and fine cambric underneath; but I did this as gently as I could, recognising that, if this was a trance in which she lay, any rough awakening would have its danger. At first I thought there was no movement, but, by-and-by, assured myself of a very faint and weak, but regular, pulsation. This was sleep, then, deep and death-like, but still sleep, and not death itself.

Lifting up my head, when I had satisfied myself of this, in one of the room's many mirrors I saw reflected the group we made.

"Good heavens!" I thought, "could even an angry husband look upon her now and believe that she was foul of heart! Heartless she may be, but not foul of heart. Soulless, but not with a polluted soul."

Having as well as I could restored the disorder I had made in her dainty drapings, I resolved that, if I could manage it, her husband should look upon her thus and now.

The outer room was empty and I did not wish to ring a bell, not knowing by whom it might be answered; so, again, I made my difficult and painful pilgrimage through the great house. I had no hesitation in leaving Elfie, confident that she would not wake.

"You said you would like to look at her again if it might be when she slept; she sleeps now," was all I said to Allan.

"She can sleep!" was all his comment; but he rose at once and led me back.

I made him go in alone.

While I waited in the outer room I prayed the foolish prayer that she might wake! Might wake to throw her arms about his neck, and by some words of penitence succeed in touching the heart, which her passive and most innocent-looking loveliness must already have softened.

"The gods help those who help themselves." I tried to help on the fulfilment of my prayer; forgetting what might be

the danger of such a course for Elsie, I brushed some toilette ornaments off a table, falling to the ground they broke and made a considerable crash.

I listened, but there was no sound from the inner room.

The time till Allan came out seemed to me long; but whether it was nearer five minutes or fifty I have no means of knowing.

When he came out I avoided looking into his face.

"You are sure that is sleep?" he questioned, as he closed the door upon the room in which she lay, and there was a strange, an eager vibration in his voice. "It looks like death. When there was that crash in here she never so much as flickered an eyelash. It looks like death. Are you sure it is only sleep?"

"I could feel her heart beat. It is not, therefore, death," I answered.

After a pause, "Let her sleep on," was all that came from him, and his voice was not the voice that had just spoken, but one that sounded deaf and muffled.

"You may be certain I shall not wake her," I assured him.

He kept his face turned from me; he had taken up and made show of attentively examining some pretty trifle from the dressing-table. Evidently he did not wish me to see his face, but, to a keener ear and quicker intelligence than mine, that change of voice might have been as significant as any expression of face. But I—I did not dare even to try to understand it!

Presently he dropped the thing on which his eyes had been for some moments fixed; dropped it suddenly as if it burnt his fingers, only then noticing, as I, too, only then noticed, what it was—a snake of massive gold Elsie often wore round her throat.

He looked at his watch then, and then turned towards me.

"It is later than I thought," he said; "hoping you may now soon get to rest I will bid you good-bye now, not to disturb you again. You shall hear from me very soon, nothing unforeseen happening. When I am away from here I shall be more master of myself."

I tried to mutter some blessing upon him, some prayer for him, but I broke down.

He took both my hands in his. He kissed them, and he kissed my cheek.

"Believe me, I am not, as I seem, in-

sensible of the sacrifice you are making for me. God only can reward you. He will, in the consciousness that you have prevented the heaping up of crime upon crime, madness upon madness, misery upon misery!"

Directly he released my hands I was busy with my handkerchief; when I looked up he was gone, and there stood Markham waiting to take me to my own rooms.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

"NOT the rooms you had before this, Miss Hammond, ma'am," said Markham, guiding me in a different direction from that I had been about to take. "Your own rooms, as was meant to be a pleasant surprise to you, wasn't quite ready then. It's not much as you'll care about pleasantness and surprises to-night, I know, ma'am," she added, as she led me into a very Paradise of elegant and luxurious comfortableness.

I just dropped into a large, low chair by the fireside and sobbed. When an old woman once takes to crying it's not easy for her to leave off.

"Mrs. Hannah will be here soon, ma'am," Markham told me, soothingly. "Mr. Braithwait has sent for her. He says my hands will be full in looking after my mistress, and that you'll be the better for having your own woman about you."

I couldn't control my sobbing. I pulled off my bonnet, worn until now, and dashed it on to the ground. (My best bonnet, too, usually treated with respect! Of course, Markham immediately picked it up.) I threw my handkerchief over my head, to sob behind it unrestrainedly, as the cottage women do behind their aprons. Why, I had often wondered—whether to give the sacredness of secrecy to their sorrow, or to hide what they might think the unseemly working of convulsed features.

"There's nothing you can do for me. Look to your mistress," I managed to say to Markham, who, on that hint, left me.

I must have sobbed myself to sleep, for the next thing I remember was waking at some noise in the room, to a confused sense of danger and disaster, snatching the handkerchief off my face to see Hannah replenishing the fire, and to find by the clock upon the mantel-shelf that it was past midnight.

"In my opinion it don't do nobody much good to sleep out of their beds," observed Hannah, answering my bewildered



look; "but Mr. Braithwait, as is master here, present or absent, as I suppose, said so particular not to wake you, that I've not a done so."

Hannah's broad familiar face in the unfamiliar room at first rather added to, than diminished, my bewilderment. I remained some time apparently wide awake, but with my inner senses still asleep. Then, by degrees things came back to me.

"Is Mr. Braithwait gone?" was my first question.

"But now, ma'am. I heard the carriage drive off just before I began to do up the fire. It's the two o'clock mail from York to London as he's going by, seemingly."

"And Mrs. Braithwait, Hannah? What have you heard of her?"

"More than enough, ma'am, you may be sure!" was Hannah's answer.

"Did she wake before her husband left?"

"No; she sleeps as if she never meant to wake again. They've undressed her, as if she'd been a doll—Mrs. Markham has and Parker—and took her up, and laid her in her bed, and she never give no sign. But now, Miss Hammond, ma'am, would it be making too bold in me for me to ask what is it as has happened? For there's foolish talk below, ma'am; and there's disrespectful-speaking persons, and if there was one as knew the truth to tell it them, why, ma'am, a word in season, how good it is."

"What is it the disrespectful-speaking persons are saying, Hannah?"

"It's in my duty to tell you, if you ask, Miss Hammond, ma'am; otherwise, you being, like myself, a maiden lady, not, of course, that I'm a lady, but——"

"Too many words, Hannah; speak quick and plain."

"The plainness you must forgive, then, ma'am, as being your own orders. They say, then, ma'am, that Mrs. Braithwait she was going to run away from Master Allan—Mr. Braithwait, I should say; that he, somehow, found it out and brought her home; that he's sworn a great oath never to see her or to speak to her no more; and that he's gone away to destroy himself. They say all this, and there's worse than this they says."

"Tell them Miss Hammond sends them her compliments, and that what she says is, that they're fools and liars," I exclaimed in a sudden flare up.

"Not much use, ma'am, if I may say

so, to tell them that and nothing more. I don't think as that would pacify them."

"Nor would it satisfy your curiosity, my good Hannah. You can tell them then that Mrs. Braithwait has offended her husband, by doing what was thoughtless, foolish, wrong—by riding out when he had forbidden her to ride, and in company he did not think fit for her. That their master, in his anger, has hastened the journey his doctors had (as they know) ordered him to take—that he is going a long sea-voyage, and may remain many months abroad. You can tell them, too, that their mistress is ill, from grief at her disobedience, and its consequences, and, also, from the fright of having seen that old man, Sir Granton Brakespear, killed, close at her side, and in a very shocking manner. You can tell them that."

Then, partly to hinder her from asking more questions, I began to bemoan myself to Hannah, crying how tired I was, and how bad my head. On which I had to yield to her command, that I should get at once between sheets (as she expressed it) and afterwards should take something of the supper she would fetch me. "It's far on to one o'clock, it's true," she said, "but I make no doubt they're all up still, a gossiping."

That she herself was not among the gossipers, gave bitterness to the tone in which she spoke of them.

I sent for the last news of Elsie, before I would allow myself to be either coaxed or tempted into that downy nest, for which my worn and fevered frame was longing. In Elsie's state there was no change. The old family physician had been to see her, by whom sent, no one seemed to know. He had ordered them to do nothing, just to let her sleep on, and had said he hoped to see me when he should come in the morning.

The waking of that next morning was not an enviable sensation. I had upon me such a woful weight of weary consciousness of painful and difficult work, for which my feeble powers were all unfit, awaiting me. Still, I thanked Heaven, to find myself more capable than I had the night before expected ever to feel again.

It was pretty late in the morning, and, through one of the windows, which Hannah had set open, there streamed in a very flood of sunshine, and sweetness, and of song. The first waves of the full spring-tide were pouring over wood and dale, rock and stream, lawn and bed and

border of the Braithwait park and shrubberies and gardens.

As I lay, thinking of how the poor young master of these fair lands was driven forth from his Eden, by the lovely creature I had bred up to be his scourge, I could have wept my heart out, for the pity of it, but that my old heart felt too hot and dry for tears. I tried, instead, to lift it up in supplication, and then I was just saying to myself, "you must rest no longer," was just getting into my slippers and my dressing-gown, to go and see after Elfie, when Hannah, entering with my breakfast-tray, ordered me back to bed.

Mrs. Braithwait's condition was unchanged, she told me. She still slept on. Dr. Carruthers, who had already been, still said nothing was to be done, except to take moderate pains not to wake her; he had left his kind regards and compliments for me, and his promise to call again later in the day.

I wished at least to go and look at Elfie, but Hannah decreed that I should not leave my room till I had breakfasted. These old servants get dreadfully tyrannical. In this world a price has to be paid for everything worth having, and of such faithful service as Hannah's, such tyranny as Hannah's is usually the price.

Many times that day, that night, and the following morning, I looked at Elfie, sometimes for an hour together, watching beside her; the doctor, after several visits, left word that he was to be sent for directly she woke, or gave signs of waking, or if there seemed to be any change, either in her look or in the manner of her breathing. Still she slept on.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER sleeping two nights, the whole of the day between those nights, and on towards the close of the second day, so that eight-and-forty hours had passed since she fell asleep, Elfie suddenly opened her eyes while I was sitting by her. She looked at me, I looked at her; it was some time before a word was spoken. The room was for the moment very light, for the sun just before setting had burst from behind a cloud and shone in on the south-western side of a large projecting window. Not wishing to speak first, I had time to begin to recognise a change in Elfie, a withdrawal of brightness. She had always hitherto been such a radiant creature—now the radiance was gone. Her skin,

her hair, her eyes, all seemed to have lost their lustre. It was as if some inward light had become extinct. Was the elvish gleam and glamour for ever gone? I say advisedly, I had time to begin to recognise this change, but only to begin.

"I want Allan," were Elfie's first words. Her voice, too, was changed. It was such a joyless, toneless voice as is used by a very sick and sullen child.

When she had said for the third time, with no change of tone, and never taking her eyes from my face, "I want Allan," I answered her, keenly watching how she bore the words,

"You will have to live on with that want, Elfie, or to die of it."

"I want Allan," was said with slightly more emphasis.

"He has gone, Elfie, he has left you. He went away the night before last while you were asleep. He is not coming back again."

It was something of a wail now with which she spoke those same words, "I want Allan." The wail of a sick, spoilt, sulky child.

To all I said she answered only by those words, repeated in almost all varieties of intonation.

Had she become an idiot? I wondered.

I drew up some blinds that had been drawn down, letting all the light I could into the room, and I studied her face.

The normal ground colour of Elfie's flesh was the white you see in the whitest petal of an old-fashioned white rose. I mean such white roses as seem to have a potential blush within their whiteness (indeed, "the maiden's blush" was, in my young days, the name given to those roses of which I am thinking), a potential blush within their whiteness warming that whiteness, but nothing of that tinge of greenish-gold, or of saffron-yellow, or of salmon-pink, to be found in so many modern varieties of white roses.

That was its normal ground colour, but on Elfie's face would come and go at slightest cause, almost always, however, physical cause, every possible gradation of that clear, flame-tinted red, the rose of rose, of such red roses as have in their rich red no bluish lights or violet shadows.

To-day, Elfie's face was of an unvarying opaque dead white. Her eyes, under which were bruise-like, dark markings, had that curious look of blank absence of outward intelligence, together with intense inward concentration, something of which

is to be seen in a cat about to spring upon her prey. But it was, I think, her mouth which had changed the most, and her mouth had always been her most characteristic feature, characteristic in its want of character (if it is not too paradoxical an abuse of language so to speak), employing the word character to mean written signs of conscience, principle, rectitude. I never knew a mouth so pretty, with all physical prettiness, and so completely without spiritual beauty as Elfie's had been; so mobile and so various, and yet never, by any chance, expressing anything better than easy good humour, mischievous mirth, enjoyment of life, sense of pleasantness, and love of luxury. Now, its physical prettiness was gone, it seemed drawn, and pinched, and parched, as I have so often seen the mouths of sick children, serving only as indexes of the physical derangement and suffering. As I bent over Elfie thus, studying her face searchingly, the mouth began to quiver, and the eyes to fill: suddenly she threw her arms about my neck and drew me down beside her, cheek to cheek.

"I want Allan," was said once again; and then she began to cry, a low, plaintive wailing, most melancholy crying, as of a lost child. She cried and she cried, and sometimes I cried with her, and sometimes I was quiet, because I could cry no more. She cried and she cried, till the clinging arms relaxed their hold of me; and I, releasing myself, and bringing a light by which to look at her, found she was again asleep. She had, of course, touched no food since the breakfast-time of that fatal morning. When I spoke of this to Dr. Carruthers, for whom I had sent, and told him of what had been Elfie's only and often-repeated words while awake, and told him of my fears about her—her state seeming to me like that of a person fallen into imbecile melancholy—he treated her long fast as a thing of no consequence; for the rest, he only lifted his bushy black brows, saying, "Time will show. In these cases it is always difficult to decide how much is cannot, how much will not." And then, turning his back upon his patient, whom altogether he seemed to think of little or no consequence, he entered into a long and interested talk about Allan Braithwait.

As he left, he said that probably Elfie might fast a week with perfect impunity. He advised that she should not be asked to take food, but that some simple matter,

a glass of milk, a cup of broth, a plate of bread-and-butter, or of biscuits, should be left in her sight, and in her easy reach, at times when she might believe herself to be alone.

## CHAPTER XX.

FOR another day and night things remained much the same. Sometimes Elfie would, for a short while, be open-eyed, but even then her mind seemed to be asleep; she did not speak, nor stir, nor touch nor taste the food and drink, always set in her easy reach.

On the evening of the third day—it was Sunday, and I had, so sure was I that I should not want anything, let both Markham and Parker go to the evening service at a rather distant village church—at Braithwait church there was no evening service—while Hannah had my leave for an hour's gossip with an old crony at one of the lodges. I was sitting, where Elfie could not see me, by one of the windows in her room. I had been reading, and had not long laid down my Bible—at first to listen for a moment to the Rusmoor bells. Something in their irregular sweet music, ringing through the spring sunset, and athwart the contented cawing of homeward circling rooks; something, after they had ended, and the sunset had faded, in the clear piping of blackbird, and glorious song-gushes of the thrush, somehow caused to sweep through me, wave upon wave, such a flood of confused memories, of youth, and hope, and love, of how it used to feel in the springs of long ago, when the bells' music, and the birds' song, and the mellow sunsets, and the "coloured twilights," and the moon-births, and the scents of flowers, all seemed merely as so many voices to one's own delicious consciousness of being young and fair, with all the splendid possibilities of life, and all its enchanting mysteries lying hidden, only lightly folded, close at hand. Such a flood of such memories, as I say, swept through me, with so strong a sweep as for the moment to carry me away beyond recognition of present time and place, till some movement of Elfie's, followed an instant after by a long and heavy sigh, aroused me.

I had not been able to look at Elfie's state with the indifference shown by Dr. Carruthers. To me it did not seem impossible that she might soon sigh out her last breath. My heart beat violently as I hastily rose up to go to her.

Elfie had lifted herself to a sitting position, and was looking about her; her face, like a white flower, absorbed the twilight, which sufficed to show that it was wan and drawn.

"I am disappointed," she breathed out in a sighing whisper, which I could just catch.

"At what are you disappointed?" I asked her, trying to speak very softly.

She stared at me blankly a good long time.

"I am hungry!" she then said. "I thought I was dead, but I'm not, and I'm hungry!" That was all she would say. I poured out a cup of milk and gave it to her.

She only sipped a little and set it down. Again she looked about her, with a forlorn air of discontent, as if seeking what she did not find. Was there any thought of her husband in this I wondered? Then she began to cry, a faint whimpering sort of crying, as of a disappointed dissatisfied child. But she did not cry long, probably she had not strength enough for much crying. When she had left off, I said, tentatively, wanting to test how far she could understand what was said to her,

"You should be thankful to find yourself alive, Elfie! You are not fit to die, poor child, you need to learn to live."

For all answer she dropped her head back among her pillows, sighed out, "I am so tired!" and slept again.

Next day she allowed herself to be moved out of bed and dressed. She took bite or sup of whatever food was brought her, without any heed given, even by a look, to what that food might be, though her former wont was to be very delicately dainty.

Two days after, she was down-stairs, then soon outdoors—looking as if the wind might blow her away, and the sunshine pierce through her, but not, as yet, seeming to ail anything physically, not even to be very noticeably weak. She hardly ever spoke. A wondering widening of her eyes, and a startled twitching of their brows, was almost always her only answer to any question asked her. The few words she did say were childish in the extreme, but with a childishness quite different from that she had sometimes affected formerly: *this* was real, simple,

serious, sincere, *that* had been at once elvish and coquettish, a mirthful mischievous mockery.

Time went on, and no letter from Allan and no tidings of him, direct or indirect, reached me. Of course this silence made me increasingly anxious, for I was certain that when he left me he had meant that I should hear from him very soon.

I wrote to my good old friend Mr. Brock, senior partner of the firm, Brock and Greenstreet, by whom all Braithwait law-business was always transacted. I got a kind letter by return of post, but one that could give me no satisfaction.

Quite late in the afternoon of the day but one following that on which I had last seen him, Mr. Braithwait had called at their office, Mr. Brock told me.

It had been a brief call, Mr. Braithwait stating that he had but just arrived in town, that he had, by letter, taken his passage on board the North Star, and must join the vessel immediately.

Why, I wondered, on reading this, had he only quite late that afternoon but just arrived in town? He should have been in town before mid-day upon the previous day! Where, upon the road, could he have so long delayed?—I wondered, not so very long afterwards, that I had wondered, that I had not without any wondering known.

Mr. Braithwait, Mr. Brock said, looked ill, hurried, haggard, anxious, and had owned to feeling ill, and ill in a manner which especially affected and confused his brain. He spoke of the sea-air as the thing which was to "set him right," but spoke of it, so thought Mr. Brock, with the expression of face and tone of voice of a man who knows he never can, by any earthly agency, be "set right."

Mr. Braithwait had said that directly he felt sufficiently better to be somewhat more master of his own mind (and this he hoped might be the case within the next eight-and-forty hours) he would forward to Messrs. Brock and Greenstreet fuller instructions than he was able to give them then as to what was to be done in certain conjunctures and emergencies. He had, I learnt, remembered to warn them, as he had warned me, against giving too easy credence to any rumour of his death.

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